

Darebin Climate Emergency Plan

Ideas for a new structure

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A key issue

The current style of the public consultation draft of the Darebin Climate Emergency Plan is to show how the new plan commitments are built on or differ from past practice – ie. it is a rear view mirror perspective.

But given that Darebin has committed to a substantially new approach to climate policy (the emergency action approach), arguably, the Plan should be orientated around the new goals and what needs to be done to realise them.

Seeing the structure of the current draft from a safe climate restoration/climate emergency perspective

- **Chapter 1** (Executive Summary) gives a sense of the new emergency approach mainly through listing the overarching goals of the plan. However the description of the Darebin Energy Foundation (DEF) in the list of Plan highlights makes no connection to the new climate emergency approach even though it is understood that the Foundation will play a key role. The DEF reference is sending mixed messages.
- **Chapter 2** on the ‘Climate Emergency’ is about the climate **problem**. It starts with some description of the climate problem and then in section 2.1 it outlines **non**-emergency responses so far to the climate problem. This chapter needs a section that builds up a high level strategy for solving the climate emergency. And the goals from Chapter 4 could be moved into chapter 2 to finish it off.
- **Chapter 3** then describes action so far on emissions. This is a ‘rear view mirror’ exercise that gives no context for where emissions reductions fit into a maximum protection/safe climate restoration paradigm. The discussion of local emissions would be better positioned after the climate emergency approach is set up.
- **Chapter 4** sets out the overarching goals for the Plan – but there is no explanation of why the goals were chosen or any elaboration of what they mean in a strategic or practical sense. At the end of Chapter 4 there is list of other Council policies, strategies and plan that have some bearing on the climate issue but there is no explanation of the strategic framework that links the other policies, strategies and plans to the new Climate Emergency Plan.
- **Chapter 5** sets out the action programs. There are a number of improvement opportunities in this chapter:
 - In this chapter there are 9 sub-sections that present the Key Directions. Each one has a ‘Context’ sub-section. I think that these sub-sections need to be divided into two, with the first part being about “What needs to be achieved” and the second part being “where we are now” This second topic could include material that covers “progress that we can build on”.

There are several reasons why it would be valuable to break up the context sections into two. In order to avoid a rear view mirror approach, the context should start with a backcasting discussion. With backcasting you start with the desired future that you want and you make that future your actual action goal – see the backcasting steps below.

Backcasting (from principles of success)

Step A	Imagined successful future (A)	Where do we want to get to? Where don't we want to get to? (expressed as principles)
Step B	Current reality (B)	Described using the same parameters that are critical to framing the imagined successful future
Step C	The Gap	Specify the gap between A and B
Step D	Possible solutions	Driven by the A-B gap
Step E	Implementation	Viable, flexible pathways for delivering solutions.

Dual-track management

While it is vital for a climate emergency approach to use the backcasting method and to make sure this is clearly reflected in the Climate Emergency Plan, it is also true that the Plan has to connect with here-and-now imperatives and relevant aspects of history. A 'dual-track' management method can be used to juggle these imperatives to create the future we need and also cope with here-and-now circumstances. See:

<http://www.green-innovations.asn.au/Dual-track-management-for-sustainability.htm>

- The two context elements should be followed by the Objectives of the Key Directions and then by the supporting policies and the actions.
- **Key Direction # 1** – the three paragraphs on “Offsets will be considered last” should be moved to new subsection at the end of Chapter 5 on Action Priorities (see below) because it doesn't relate in any strong way to the Climate Emergency theme of subsection 5.1. And the action item on drawdown should be moved to a new Key Direction on Drawdown (see below). The community engagement commitments relating to climate emergency response awareness need to be strengthened.
- **Key Direction # 5** – This sub-section should be retitled “Consumption and Waste” so that it can include consideration of the indirect climate impacts arising from the purchase and consumption of materials and other products (including food). The reason why new material on consumption should go into this section rather than having a new section of its own is that the actions relating to consumption and waste avoidance are of a similar character.
- **New Key Direction # 7** – After the Key Directions sub-sections that deal with emissions reduction (# 1 to # 6), there should be a new Key Direction sub-section dealing with the drawdown of excess CO₂ in the air – not from an offsetting perspective – but from the point of view of returning the atmospheric CO₂ to a safe level (eg. about 280 ppm) as fast as possible. With the introduction of this section the action item related to drawdown in Key Direction #1 should be moved to the new sub-section. This new sub-section could be called “Carbon dioxide drawdown”.
- **Key Direction # 8** – Engaging the community – this section currently feels a bit aimless or lacking focus. I think this is because every Key Direction sub-section has material on community engagement in it so there is nothing much special to say in the Key Direction sub-section devoted to the topic. I think the best solution is to eliminate Key Direction #8. Any content from this sub-section (Key Direction # 8) that needs to be retained could be distributed to the most appropriate Key Direction sub-section.
- **Key Direction # 9** – The Darebin Energy Foundation – Since the Foundation is going to be dealing with the whole climate issue, its name should probably be changed to reflect its scope of action.
- **Phasing and Priorities** – There needs to be a new section at the end of Chapter 5 that gives

guidance on action phasing and priority setting. The scope of actions covered in the Climate Emergency Plan is huge and all possible actions can't be taken at once and at full strength. The need for sequencing is recognised in each Key Direction subsection's table of action where the timeframe is indicated for each action. However there is a larger strategic perspective that needs to be covered that relates to the creation of a sequence of 'whole-of-program' action phases that indicate the main or critical outcomes that are being pursued in each period.

Strategy phases	Phase 1: Outwards & mandate building	Phase 2: Upwards Phase 2a – state focus Phase 2b – federal focus	Phase 3: Downwards
Main emphases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To engage as many other Councils as possible (in Victoria & Australia & globally) in taking on a climate emergency action approach. ● To strengthen the Darebin mandate (across the political spectrum, and in intensity in all demographics) – so that the community commitment to the emergency approach is unassailable. (<i>Note: doing some solutions delivery locally is necessary at all times to strengthen the mandate ie. Council is seen to be taking its rhetoric seriously.</i>) ● To prepare for the next strategy phase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To work with partners (other Councils, community groups etc.) to get the State and Federal Governments to urgently declare a climate emergency and to take on a commensurate action program. ● To maintain the mandate. ● To take advantage of the improved context when the State government declares climate emergency. ● To prepare for the next strategy phase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To deliver the full suite of safe climate restoration solutions locally, at full scale and emergency speed. ● To maintain and if necessary further build the local mandate to the level needed to support the full intensity solutions delivery locally.

- **Chapter 6** – A climate emergency approach implies fast change (in both the problem and the solutions). Chapter 6 indicates that a major review will be undertaken on the Climate Emergency Plan in 2021. It is highly likely that the Plan will need relatively frequent updates as experience with the new climate emergency develops and as the climate situation develops. This updating flexibility needs to be flagged in the Plan itself. The title of chapter 6 could be changed to: “*Measuring, reviewing, reporting and revising*”.

A potential new structure

1. Executive summary

2. The Climate Emergency

- The threat
- Providing maximum protection and restoring a safe climate
- Overarching goals

3. Darebin's emissions and progress

4. Action to achieve our goals

- Key direction # 1 – Climate Emergency mobilisation and leadership
 - What needs to be achieved
 - Where we are now
 - Objectives
 - Supporting policies
 - Actions

(These subheadings would be repeated under each Key Direction sub-section.)

- Key direction # 2 – Energy Efficiency
- Key direction # 3 – Renewable energy and fuel switching
- Key direction # 4 – Zero emissions transport
- Key direction # 5 – Consumption and waste
- Key direction # 6 – Fossil fuel divestment
- Key direction # 7 – Carbon dioxide drawdown
- Key direction # 8 – Adaptation and resilience
- Key direction # 9 – Darebin XXXXXXXX Foundation
- Phasing and Priorities

5. Measuring, reviewing, reporting and revising

6. Resourcing